

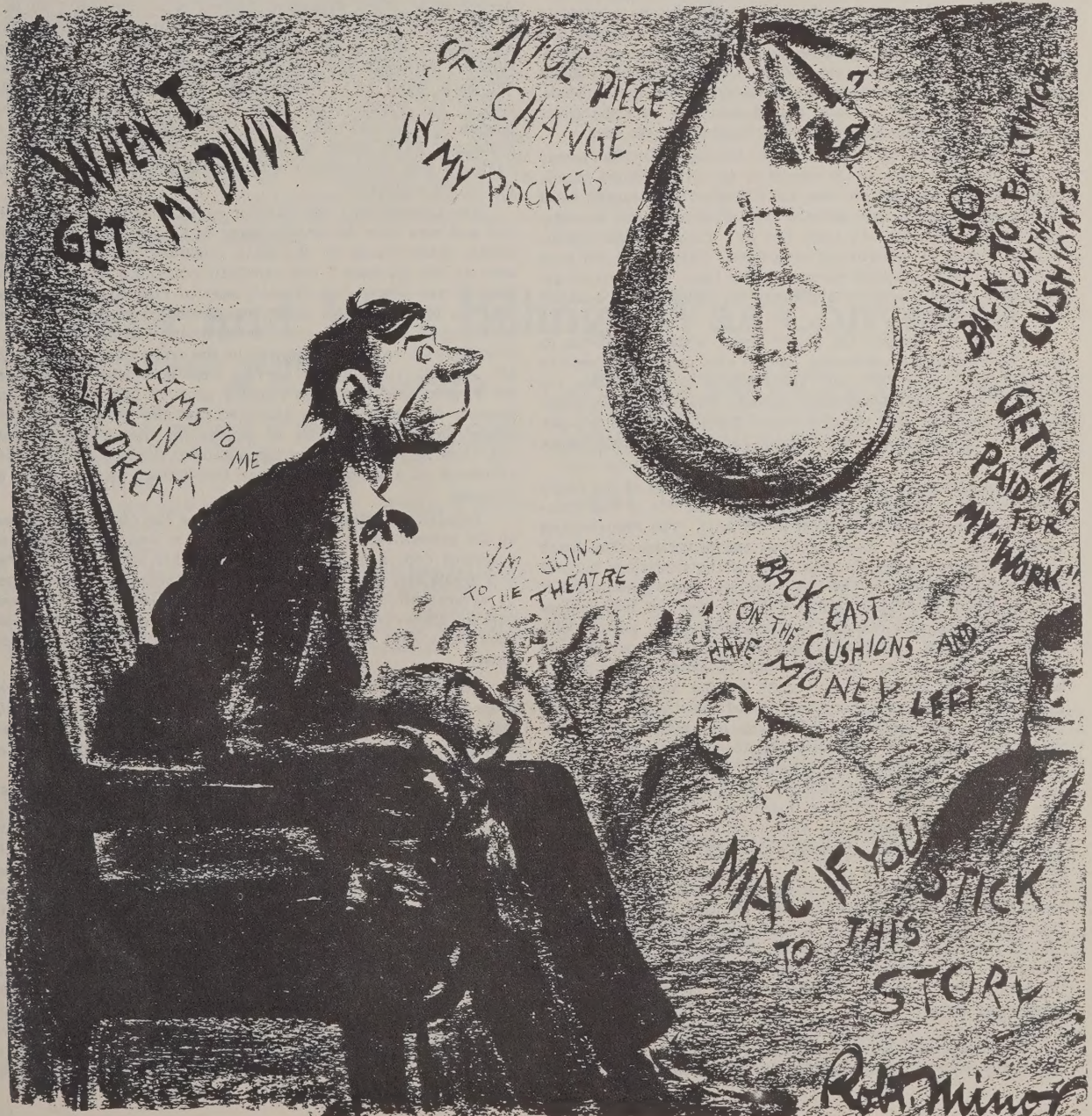
THE BLAST

LYDIA GIBSON

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No. 20



"AS GOD IS MY JUDGE, I SEEN HIM"

—Star Witness in the Billings Trial

THE BILLINGS VERDICT

THERE is no justice in heaven or on earth. That is my final conviction. Where is that just Providence we hear so much about? Where the sense of justice of the Almighty, or of any one else, when a human being, utterly innocent, can be convicted and doomed to a living death for the rest of his natural life? Where, where is Justice?

Billings has been convicted. Convicted in spite of his proven innocence. For it is literally true that in the Billings trial the prosecution not only failed to make out its case, but the defense actually *proved* the innocence of Billings, proved that, even according to the State's testimony, it was a physical impossibility for Billings to have been at the place of the explosion.

And yet Billings was convicted. Was there ever a more crying injustice? No, not since the days of the Chicago Anarchists foully murdered by blind rage and bitter prejudice. Indeed, the San Francisco case is even more heinous in its cold-blooded bestiality. For history can at least explain, if not palliate, the judicial murders of 1887 by a temporary mental aberration of the people, a virtual insanity of fear and hatred resulting from the bitter class feeling in the tremendous labor struggles of those days.

No such excuse can be given in the Billings case. The people of San Francisco were deeply stirred by the Preparedness parade explosion, but they did not lose their heads. The tragedy filled them with grief, but they scorned the infamy of lynch law suggested by the Hearsts and their vile ilk. They refused to sanction a debauch of blood-drunk vengeance. They would not turn murderers, deeply as they mourned their loss. They waited patiently for the authorities to apprehend the guilty. They wouldn't shed innocent blood.

What little hysteria the yellow press, which thrives on it, was able to arouse or stimulate, had all died out long before the Billings trial began. The city had resumed its normal life, the people followed their accustomed pursuits, and even in the courtroom nothing disturbed the even tenor of the usual legal proceedings, save the occasional Holy Jumper antics of the public prosecutors.

There was nothing in the atmosphere in or out of the courtroom, nor anything beneath the surface of the life of San Francisco, to indicate unusual interest in the trial. The Preparedness parade, nay, its very object, was all but forgotten. The bomb passed into history and the great bulk of the citizenship evinced no particular interest in the trial, because it was generally felt that the police had failed to find a clew to the real perpetrators of the explosion, and that the criminal proceedings against Billings, et al., were a somewhat ungraceful mode of covering up the inefficiency of the District Attorney's office rather than a serious attempt to fasten the crime on the accused. It was therefore generally felt that the arrested labor men were mere police scapegoats, and that there was no case against them. And when the public prosecutor insisted on charging Billings, et al., with a "conspiracy to dynamite people holding different social views" and was sarcastically sat upon by Judge Dunne, who demanded actual evidence instead of "vague charges of a general conspiracy against the whole world," the public was convinced that the District Attorney was merely trying to save his official face.

But when the actual trial of the "bomb plot" began, and the prosecution introduced its witnesses, it quickly became apparent that there was indeed a plot, a deep, sinister plot—not a *bomb* plot, however, but a plot to clear the District Attorney's office of the charge of inefficiency and at the same time stifle the voices of certain men who had become a thorn in the flesh of the enemies of Labor.

* * *

Like the scenes of some absorbing drama, the "conspiracy" was being unfolded on the stage of the dingy court-room. Within

the railing, on reserved seats, sat the main actors of this intense human play: Warren K. Billings, the first of the accused to be tried; District Attorney Chas. Fickert and his assistants, Brennan and Cunha; the attorneys for the defense, McNutt, Lomasney and Lawlor; and on the box-like bench, to the left of Superior Judge Dunne, the twelve men, "good and true," all retired business men, well known to the District Attorney for their loyal service in similar capacity on numerous previous occasions. The jurors, whose combined age was more than equal to five centuries, listened with varying degrees of attention to the straggling stream of witnesses—witnesses for the prosecution who testified under oath, so help me God, that Billings was in *three different places at the same time*, dressed in as many different suits of clothes. According to these witnesses, Billings was—between 1:50 to 2 p. m. on the fateful day of July 22d—on the corner of Steuart and Market streets, the place of the explosion, with a heavy suitcase, variously and positively identified as black, yellowish, and as a small grip; Billings was, *at the same time*, on the roof of 721 Market street, over a mile from the scene of explosion, and he was also, *at the very same moment*, talking to Policeman Earle Moore in front of 721 Market street, and also having a long conversation with Estelle Smith in the dental office of her employer.

The prosecution's identification of Billings was no less positive and sure than the establishment of his whereabouts. Estelle Smith, chief witness for the State, identified him by a "peculiar scar on his forehead," her certainty remaining unshaken even after it was proven that the only scar or rash Billings ever had was—on his knee. Nor could Miss Smith be swerved from her faithfulness to obligation when it was established that her mother, Mrs. Kidwell, had been promised by the prosecution a pardon for Mr. Kidwell, her husband, serving time in Folsom penitentiary for forgery, and that Miss Smith's uncle is imprisoned in San Quentin for murder. She protested that the reward of \$17,000 offered for "the conviction of *anyone* for the outrage of July 22d," had no temptation for her whatever, though her salary as attendant at a dental office was insufficient for her mode of dressing.

Equally protesting and confident was the other star witness of the prosecution, a certain McDonald, a man about town and notorious dope fiend, who, according to his own testimony, "as in a dream saw the suitcase placed on the sidewalk." Confronted by several witnesses who swore that he boasted of being well paid for his testimony, McDonald admitted that his hotel expenses were being paid by the police to "protect" him against the defense.

Quite as devoid of any hope of reward were a number of other State witnesses, mostly police and detectives, whose testimony impressed every one as told with the facility bred of practice, and who unanimously agreed that they were incapable of being mistaken or telling a lie.

Subtly woven through the State testimony could be traced the fine handiwork of Private Detective Swanson, confidential representative of the Pacific Gas & Electric Co., the United Railroads, chief detective of the Public Utilities Bureau, etc. It was Swanson, looming large in the background of the District Attorney's office; Swanson offering a bribe of \$5,000 to Billings and Weinberg, in turn, *a week before the bomb explosion*, to implicate Mooney in the blowing up of some power towers of the United Railroads corporation; Swanson, through Brennan, promising \$15,000 to one of the attorneys for the defense for double-crossing Billings and Mooney; Swanson threatening friends of the accused labor men with dire punishment for refusing to bear false witness against them. It was always Swanson, the Private Detective, hovering about the court, prompting the District Attorney at the trial, smiling encouragement at the State wit-

nesses, gliding in and out of the court room, and nodding familiarly to the jurors in the corridor during recess.

All this in full view of the big audience attracted by the sensational trial. But unseen by the casual observer, unseen even—unfortunately—by the attorneys for the defense, there loomed behind the scenes a grim figure, silent and commanding, whose invisible presence was yet palpably manifest to every one of social intelligence: a figure whose heavy breath surcharged the atmosphere with an ominous sense of a stealthily waged class war, pregnant with mysterious hints of hidden forces, of whispered threats—"Chamber of Commerce"—"Open Shop"—"Labor and Capital"—"Law and Order Committee."

* * *

At last came the turn of the defense. Witness after witness exposed the false network of the State's accusation against Billings. Reputable citizens, professional and business men, Grand Army veterans, participants in the Preparedness parade and members of patriotic organizations—total strangers to the accused—completely disproved the testimony of the prosecution. They tore its evidence to shreds. The defense produced the man who had spoken to Officer Moore and whom the latter mistook for Billings. A youth on the roof of 721 Market street, resembling Billings, was proven to have been mistaken for the accused prisoner. It was a patient at the dental office who had held the conversation with Estelle Smith, attributed by her to Billings. Billings had no suitcase on that day, nor had he ever visited the place where Miss Smith was employed. Eye-witnesses, supported by photographic evidence, proved the accused to have been far from the scene of the explosion and in no way connected with it. Billings stood completely exonerated.

The prosecution was shaken to its very foundation. It did not dare ask for the death penalty. It ignored the evidence and wrapped itself in the folds of the flag. "Gentlemen of the Jury," implored Assistant District Attorney Brennan in his closing speech, "you must convict this boy to wash off the stain put on our flag. We do not ask for his life. We want to give him a chance to tell on the real men back of this conspiracy against our civilization."

The crowded court room held its breath as the jurors slowly filed in. They had been out three hours, two of which were spent at luncheon—at an open-shop place. The fate of a fellow human was in their hands, but long deliberation—it was felt on every hand—was unnecessary. The case of the defense was too clear for doubt.

"We find the defendant, Warren K. Billings, guilty of murder in the first degree, as charged."

Dead silence. The voice of the foreman of the jury died away, like a hollow echo, and a pall of darkness seemed to settle over the court room. The audience sat silent, motionless, as if stunned by a sudden blow. Then, as with a common instinct, all eyes turned on Billings. The youth stood with lips twitching, blank astonishment in his eyes, gazing mutely at the jurors.

It was only an instant—and then the Judge recovered himself. The jury was dismissed.

Like shadows, pale and silent, the people faded from the court room.

* * *

MEN and WOMEN of America, children of liberty and justice-loving sires, will you suffer such judicial assassination of innocent men?

How and Why Billings Was Convicted

CONTRADICTORY TESTIMONY OF STATE WITNESSES

JOHN McDONALD:

It must have been eight or ten minutes to two when I first discovered him (Billings) * * * at the corner (Steuart and Market streets) * * * MOONEY was with him.

JOHN CROWLEY:

I am positive sure it was 1:55 * * * Billings at Steuart and Mission streets * * * It was not MOONEY at all.

ESTELLE SMITH:

After Mayor Rolph passed in the parade (nine minutes to two) * * * Billings coming down from the roof of 721 Market street.

According to the evidence of the prosecution, therefore, Billings was at Steuart and Market streets, Steuart and Mission, and at 721 Market (a mile away), all at the same time.

HOW THEY "IDENTIFIED" BILLINGS

STATE Witness Policeman EARLE MOORE (motorman for the U. R. R. during car strike):

I tooted the horn several times, and I could not get the driver. Finally the party walked out who I later identified as Mr. Billings, walked out to the sidewalk * * * I says, "Who is the driver of the car?" He turns around * * * looks towards 721 Market street, and he says, "I don't know; he will be here in a minute."

DEFENSE Witness THOMAS DODGE:

He (Policeman Moore) says, "Is this your machine?" I says, "No, the owner of the machine has gone into the building there" (illustrating).

STATE Witness Mrs. NELLIE EDEAU:

I first saw Mr. Billings * * * on the roof of 721 Market street * * * talking to somebody down in the street. * * * I am positive it was about 1:30 to 1:25.

DEFENSE Witness AL DE CACCIA:

About 1:30 * * * I was on the roof of 721 Market street. * * * I made sounds and gave directions to one of the boys in the store how to get up there.

DEFENSE Attorney MAXWELL McNUTT points out to the jury strong resemblance between BILLINGS and DE CACCIA.

Several witnesses corroborate DE CACCIA to the effect that it was he, DE CACCIA, and not BILLINGS, who was on the roof of 721 Market street, shouting down to them in the street directions how to reach the roof.

WHY THEY WANT TO "GET" BILLINGS, MOONEY, ET AL.

MRS. HAMMERBERG:

I told you (Mr. Brennan) at the time you and Mr. Swanson came up, the day that you told me you had to get somebody or they were going to get you. Q. Who said that? A. You (Mr. Brennan). Q. Where? A. In my house. Q. It was not in the office of the police department? A. It was in my house. Q. Who was present at the time I made that statement? A. Mr. Swanson and Mr. Hammerberg.

C. L. LOGAN:

McDonald * * * said the Chief patted him on the back and said, "MAC, if you stick to this story, you can go back to Baltimore or Detroit on the cushions * * * with a nice piece of change in your pockets." He told me that on the corner of Fourth and Natoma, near Fourth, in front of the Eagle House; also in Third and Natoma, and in front of the Peniel Mission, a few nights after.

COLONEL REQUA, of the Salvation Army:

Q. * * * You said to McDonald that "if he will testify and these men are convicted, that he will probably receive a large portion of the reward" to which he replied, "Yes, the Chief told me that I would go back to Baltimore on the cushions with plenty of change in my pockets."

A. That is correct. * * * he said he was going to get three dollars a day. * * * he said he was having a good time and he was going to the theatre right after.

FRED HARRIS:

McDonald said he had a good thing now. I said, "How is that?" He says, "I am a star witness in the bomb case, and when the trial is over, I will be able to go back East on the cushions and have money left."

FRANK SUMNEY:

Q. * * * Did you have with John McDonald, in substance, the following conversation: Sumney: "It's pretty bad about the bomb explosion, isn't it, Mac?" McDonald: "Yes, it seems to me like in a dream. I saw a man walk out and set down a suitcase; then I looked in the saloon to see the time and walked half way up the block when the explosion went off."

A. Yes, sir.

Q. * * * did McDonald say to you, "When those fellows go over the road and I get my divvy, back to the East for me?"

A. He did.

Q. * * * in Healy's barber shop, you cut McDonald's hair, did McDonald and you have the following conversation: McDonald: "I am getting paid for my work." Sumney: "Who pays you?" McDonald: "I think it comes off the State." Sumney: "Do you have to wait to get it until the end of the trial?" McDonald: "No, I am getting three dollars a day right along and I won't have to wait until the trial is over."

A. Yes.

Mrs. Allie Kidwell, MOTHER OF ESTELLE SMITH, was promised by the prosecution a pardon for her husband now in Folsom penitentiary. Admitted by District Attorney Fickert and Assistant District Attorney Brennan.

\$17,000

is to be paid for the conviction of
A N Y O N E
for the outrage of July 22.

Affidavits by Eye-Witnesses to the Bomb Explosion Suppressed by the Prosecution

WILLIAM H. TAYLOR:

* * * I went in the saloon on the 22nd day of July, 1916, and the saloon was crowded, I having entered from the Steuart street side. I just got inside the door and turned around and came out again when a man about five feet seven or eight, with a mustache, kind of fallow complexion, was not putting the suitcase down on the sidewalk but was shoving it against the building. * * * Then I heard the bomb go off. * * * The man who moved the suitcase above-described was positively not WARREN K. BILLINGS. * * * A sergeant of police stepped up to me and said, "Did you see the man place that suitcase there?" I said "I did." * * * I was never taken by the police or anybody to see Warren K. Billings. * * * Capt. Matheson then put me in charge of Officer Desmond, who took me down to the Stockton boat. * * * I remained in Stockton three weeks, more or less. * * * About ten days ago I returned from Stockton to San Francisco and have been here ever since. I reported to Capt. Matheson on my return and he said, "If we want you we will call you," and the same statement was made to me by Officer Desmond. I never was, however, called as a witness. * * * I am absolutely positive that the defendant above named is not the man who moved the suitcase, and I did not see him in that neighborhood at all on July 22, 1916.

ELMER E. KIMBERLIN:

* * * stood on Steuart street near Market within two feet of the spot at which an explosion occurred that day. * * * that at 1:30 p. m. saw a man * * * set suitcase down on the sidewalk within two feet from where affiant was standing; * * * That the man who had set the suitcase as aforesaid was approximately five feet ten inches in height, weighed 170 pounds * * * That during the course of the trial of Warren K. Billings, this affiant saw the said Warren K. Billings in the Hall of Justice; that affiant on said 22nd day of July, 1916, did not see the said WARREN K. BILLINGS at or about the scene of the explosion at all. * * * That the watch of said affiant still remains at 2:08 as stopped on said 22nd day of July by said explosion or the missiles hitting the body of said affiant.

W. C. KERCHÉ:

* * * I saw a man with a valise climb through the light-well and onto the roof of 721 Market street about one o'clock on the day of the parade. I also saw him go down the same way about half an hour later. He was * * * fully five inches taller than BILLINGS. I so told Brennan when I saw Billings at the Richmond jail. Louis Rominger was with me at the time. He also agreed with me that the man he helped to the roof was five inches taller than Billings. That same day I asked Rominger to go with me to warn Estelle Smith to be careful about her identification. He refused and said, "They will be sore at me if I don't identify BILLINGS."

Chronological Sidelights on the Bomb Cases

May, 1916—Thomas J. Mooney, member of Molders' Union and formerly delegate to the San Francisco Labor Council, is quietly working among the street car employees of the United Railroads Company, with a view to organizing them. His services are given free. He is assisted in his efforts by the officers of the Carmen's Union, with the full knowledge and approval of W. D. Mahon, international president of the Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees of America.

June 9th—A circular letter is sent to every employee of the United Railroads, urging them to organize for their own protection and to secure improved working conditions and better wages. The letter, addressed to the "Slaves of the U. R. R.," compares conditions of the unorganized U. R. R. employees with those enjoyed by the employees of the Municipal Railroad, all of whom are union men. Letter is signed "The Carmen's Union."

June 10th, about 10 A. M.—The U. R. R. posts the following notice in all its car barns and workshops:

NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES

"This is to inform you that one T. J. Mooney, a molder by trade, but at present unemployed, who was arrested and confined in the jail at Martinez as a dynamiter, for his activities during the Pacific Gas & Electric Company strike in 1913, is at present endeavoring to enroll some of our employees in the Carmen's Union. It is needless to advise you that the company is thoroughly familiar with his every move, and takes this occasion to notify you that any man found to be affiliated with Mooney, or any union, will be promptly discharged.

(Signed) "UNITED RAILROADS OF
SAN FRANCISCO."

June 10th, evening—Mass meeting of street carmen preparatory to calling a strike of the conductors and motormen on the U. R. R. Thomas J. Mooney one of the speakers.

June 13th—Newspapers report dynamiting of the U. R. R. power towers in the San Bruno Mountains. Dynamiting supposed to have occurred on June 10th, but news of it unaccountably withheld three days.

June 25th—U. R. R. advertises in the newspapers a reward of \$5,000 for the arrest and conviction of the dynamiters. Circular letter offering similar reward sent broadcast. U. R. R. detectives visit every automobile owner, jitney driver, Municipal carman and men connected with Tom Mooney in the organization of the platform men.

July 14th—Attempt at a street car strike on the U. R. R. lines. Cars blocked on Market street. Police arrest about a dozen persons, among them Mrs. Mooney, on the charge of distributing strike circulars, blocking traffic, disturbing the peace, etc.

July 15th } Tom Mooney daily in the police court (Hall of
July 16th } Justice) attending the hearings of the arrested. En-
July 17th } gages counsel and secures bail. Is pointed out in
July 18th } the Hall of Justice as the man responsible for the
July 19th } attempted street car strike and is constantly under
July 20th } the gaze of police officers. Last case disposed of
July 20th, }

July 17th—Israel Weinberg, jitney driver, approached by Martin Swanson, Pacific Gas & Electric detective, with an offer of \$5,000 reward for information about the San Bruno dynamiting. He is told by Swanson that real evidence is not necessary. "Circumstantial evidence against Mooney would do, as he has been charged with using high explosives." Weinberg tells Swanson that he knows nothing about the matter. Swanson leaves jitney driver in great anger.

July 17th—Swanson approaches Billings and offers him a job at the garage of the Pacific Gas & Electrical Co. Gives him application blank (later found in Billings' room after his arrest).

July 19th—Swanson again offers Weinberg \$5,000 to incriminate Mooney. Weinberg assures the detective that he knows nothing of the dynamiting, and Swanson replies: "You won't talk, eh? We'll make you talk."

July 19th—Swanson makes similar offer to Arthur Silkwood, electrical worker, member of Union No. 151. Silkwood approached three times. When he said he knew nothing of the dynamiting of the San Bruno towers, Swanson threatened that he would have him discharged from the Pacific Gas & Electrical Co., where Silkwood was employed. Silkwood told Swanson that he was trying to make an honest living for his wife and children, and that if Swanson made his family suffer, he—Silkwood—would make him suffer for it.

July 19th—Swanson introduces Billings to John Britton, President of the P. G. & E. Co., and to Mr. Cantrell, general manager of the properties of the P. G. & E. Co. Takes Billings to the garage for a job. Garage manager absent, apparently purposely. Swanson shows Billings a copy of the \$5,000 reward circular. Tells Billings that such a bright fellow as he could do a lot with \$5,000. Advises him to go to New York and begin life anew. Assures him of the reward and protection if he will give information to connect Tom Mooney with the dynamiting of the towers in the San Bruno Mountains. Billings informs him that he knows nothing about the dynamiting of the towers, and Swanson replies: "You don't have to have real evidence to convict Mooney. All we need is a little circumstantial evidence, as he has twice before been accused of having explosives in his possession. It would be easy to convict Mooney."

July 21st—Mooney shadowed by detectives. Busy preparing report (filing bills, receipts, etc.) for the International President of the Amalgamated Association of Street & Electric Railway Employees of America (W. D. Mahon, President).

• July 22nd—Bomb explosion at Steuart and Market streets.

PUZZLE QUESTION:

HOW COULD MOONEY GET TIME TO ORGANIZE A BOMB PLOT?

United Labor of Chicago Pledges Aid

THE Chicago Federation of Labor, at its session on October 1st, passed the following resolutions:

Whereas, I. Weinberg of the Jitney Bus Operators' Union, Tom Mooney of the Molders, Ed. Nolan of the Machinists, Warren K. Billings, past president of the Shoe Workers, and Mrs. Rena Mooney are charged with preparedness parade dynamiting, and

Whereas, Warren K. Billings has already been convicted, though the San Francisco press report of the trial proves his innocence, and

Whereas, The opponents of labor never leave a stone unturned to divide and destroy us one by one, and

Whereas, The San Francisco Building Trades, two central bodies of Alameda County, California, thirty-five San Francisco local unions, and the Painters' District Council No. 14, Chicago, have resolved to extend their full support to these members in their fight for liberty and justice, be it

Resolved, That the Chicago Federation of Labor join in and become part of the bulwark between these members of Organized Labor and the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce.

J. A. JONES,
Local No. 147, Painters and Decorators.

We, your committee on resolutions, recommend the adoption of this resolution.

(Signed): JAMES MAGUIRE,
J. H. BRENNAN,
C. A. PENSE,
Committee.

Concurred in.

Dave Caplan

PENNED up in Los Angeles County Jail for nearly two years, after one undecisive trial, our friend and comrade Dave Caplan is being made a shuttlecock in the scramble for the office of District Attorney. The cost of railroading our Los Angeles comrades comes high, and an agitation started by the Earl papers against the extravagance of the city and county officials led towards making this special M. & M. sport a political issue. District Attorney Woolwine, "holier-than-thou" reformer and the subservient lickspittle of "Ginral" Otis, spent \$150,000 on the trials of Caplan and Schmidt. All his friends got in on the good thing and an avalanche of prosperity hit the degenerate curs and plug-uglies of the M. & M. underworld of California. The Los Angeles Defense League had all the data at hand, published items of glaring extravagance in the daily press causing endless discussions in the taxpayers' associations. Otis and his "Man Friday" Tommie Woolwine were immediately out on the defensive and kept busy explaining the reckless and unnecessary expenditures incurred in gouging their victims. Three out of four opponents of Woolwine in the primary pledged themselves to drop the Caplan case, but Tommie kept up the parrot-cry of "Loranorder." His masters spent barrels of money trying to elect him in the primary, but failed by a narrow margin. His opponent in the November election, W. T. Helms, is supported by the Earl papers, which have advocated dropping all cases and indictments arising out of the Times explosion. The chances favor Woolwine's re-election.

Caplan's retrial starts on October 16th. He is unaffraid, conscious of his innocence and confident of a full vindication IF enough funds are supplied to bring indispensable witnesses to Los Angeles. Dave Caplan, heroic soul and faithful comrade, must not be forgotten. Too many of our comrades are rotting in the state and federal prisons of America—Caplan must not be abandoned to such a fate.

There are many demands on rebel pockets, but some contributions MUST BE SENT to Luke North, of "Everyman," 232 Douglas Building, Los Angeles, so that Dave Caplan, that loyal comrade and soldier of the great social war, shall not be handicapped in this battle for his life.

—J. D.

A Prediction and Observations With Some Facts

By the Ear

(Among criminals, the Pinkerton Detective Agency is known as The Eye. Our special correspondent is to be known as The Ear.—Editor.)

THE NEXT sheriff of St. Louis County, Minnesota, will be R. D. McKercher, at present Duluth's chief of police. The reason for the change will be because of Sheriff John R. Meining's fear of the striking iron miners on the Mesaba Range. He did as much for the Steel Trust as his cowardice would let him, and then threats of gun-play frightened him. McKercher, on the other hand, is a man owned by the Duluth News-Tribune, a Steel Trust organ, and is not a coward.

There is a temporary truce now in the war against labor waged by the iron mining companies on the Mesaba Range, where three-fifths of the iron mined in the United States comes from. The miners work on a piece-rate basis and they want a standard wage of three dollars a day. Reasonable, isn't it? They also want an eight-hour day. That is also reasonable, isn't it? Yet the Steel Trust, through the Oliver Iron Mining Company, has said no. They say, "We will give you night schools with the curriculum that we shall supervise. We shall take you poor ignorant foreigners and teach you how to be good American citizens and support the preparedness movement. But we will not give you three dollars a day and we will not give you an eight-hour day. And we will rid you of the curse of the I. W. W., from which you are now suffering." Of course they don't actually say that in so many words, but that is their attitude. In fact, the Oliver Mining Company has in its files a complete plan for the "night school Americanization of its foreign employees."

The principal "Range town," as they call it in Minnesota, is Hibbing. There is a labor mayor there—Victor L. Power. He played square with the I. W. W. and with the striking miners.

On Sunday, September 10th, the *News-Tribune* published a front page article purporting to be extracts from the report of the *Minnesota State Examiner*, showing that Power, while mayor of Hibbing, had grafted and "used public moneys for purposes other than Hibbing's," that he had built miles of macadamized roadways which were unnecessary, and divers other things.

Peculiar coincidence, isn't it, that of all the papers in the State of Minnesota, the *Duluth News-Tribune*, admittedly a Steel Trust organ which is universally hated, should publish an article which tended to incriminate the mayor of a mining town who had been friendly to labor?

Carlo Tresca, Joe Schmidt, Sam Scarlett, four strikers and a woman, are now being held in Duluth for the alleged murder of James Myron, a deputy sheriff, who tried to help the Steel Trust with too much zeal. A legal battle is now being waged by Attorney John A. Keyes for the accused. He tried to have the Virginia Grand Jury indictments quashed, but was unsuccessful. The trials are scheduled to begin the first week in December, in Duluth. That city, benefiting as it does by the shipment of ore from the Mesaba Range to the steel plant, is almost solidly pro-capital.

That's the Minnesota situation at present. What will develop in the future, no one knows except Steel Trust officials and the owner of the *News-Tribune*. They might fasten the graft charge on Mayor Victor L. Power of Hibbing. They might convict Tresca and the others, innocent though they are. But there are plenty of Ears to hear of it and plenty of Voices to tell of it, and if all work in unison, none of these things may happen. In the meantime the miners have gone back to work, but it looks as if the State of Minnesota may prove a second Colorado in the near future.

The Need of The Hour

SOME of our radical exchanges suggest that a national General Strike be called, if necessary, to free Carlo Tresca, Joe Schmidt, Sam Scarlett, and the five Mesaba Range strikers now in jail at Duluth, Minnesota, charged with responsibility for the murders committed by the plug-uglies of the Steel Trust. Government in this country, so far as the workers are concerned, has developed into a new system: the rule of thugs decorated with the badge of a deputy sheriff. Well fed, fully armed and totally irresponsible, they carry on a reign of terror, supported by the police and militia. If an occasional worker resist this Cossack régime, the leaders of the strikers are arrested, charged with inciting riot and murder, and are held responsible as principals.

This is the ordinary procedure, not only in Minnesota, but in Wheatland, Ludlow, Lawrence, Paterson—in fact, in every strike region. It is certainly about time for labor to take measures to put a stop to such an outrageous state of affairs. I have no doubt that a General Strike would accomplish the desired result. It would also open the doors of every jail holding prisoners of the labor war.

But the question is, How? How induce conservative trade unions to join such a movement? The attempt in New York has failed. The General Strike proved a fizzle—and that by no means because of reactionary leadership. On the contrary, it was the rank and file that refused to listen to the call of the General Strike. Workers bred in the atmosphere of narrow craft unionism and trained in the "sanctity of contract," cannot be expected suddenly to develop the spirit of solidarity and class consciousness which is the necessary foundation of a General Strike. Much, much work will have to be done before we can hope to reach that stage in the American labor movement. Solidarity must be our slogan and the keynote of all our labor activities.

The Truth Forbidden

THE police authorities of San Francisco can hardly be blamed for stifling every free expression of opinion: they can't afford to have the truth told. Least of all in the Billings case. They have therefore muzzled free speech. Any one daring to assert his right to an opinion and to express it, is dealt with summarily. Thus nine of our Italian comrades, members of the I. W. W. and of the Anarchist Group Volonta, were arrested, one after another, when they attempted to discuss in public the Billings verdict. They demanded a jury trial and were quickly railroaded to prison and sentenced to terms varying from ten days to three months. A protest meeting in a hall and another in behalf of the bomb prisoners, were also suppressed by the police.

The press has totally ignored this crime against the most elemental rights of man. And yet the condemned are, in a fundamental sense, martyrs of liberty. Their names are worth remembering: M. Bombino, M. Centrone, G. Chiara, G. Cirio, L. Di Bari, A. Botti, L. Parenti, G. Tori and G. Scall.

Another young Italian, M. Civello, was sentenced to pay \$100 fine, or serve 100 days, for exposing in the window of his business place the picture of a nun in the arms of a priest! Police Judge J. Sullivan thought, in his purity, that the picture was "obscene." He was too drunk to grasp the lawyer's explanation that the picture was an illustration of the attitude of France when that country legislated against the Catholic Church. The popular French *bon mot* of the day, "Go, priest, and take your nun with you," was aptly featured in the picture that fell under the ban of the stupid Police Judge.

Much Ado About Nothing

B. C. Federationist

A CAPITALIST court, the supreme court of Massachusetts, it seems recently rendered a decision to the effect that, "the right to work is property." * * * It is as much property as the more obvious forms of goods and merchandise, stocks and bonds." This remarkable pronouncement has caused a most absurd and violent flutter of excitement throughout that dove-cote of simplicity known as the Labor world. Laborious efforts are put forth from various quarters to point out to an anxious world the utter absurdity of such a decision, and these efforts are launched with just as much earnestness and zeal as could possibly be the case if it made an iota of difference to the working class whether such decision was, or was not, correct. Among the numerous yappers against the iniquity of this terrible court decision we notice a certain capitalist senator, one Robert M. LaFollette of Wisconsin. This worthy yaps something as follows: "Thus the highest court of one of the thirteen original states holds that labor is property. * * * The right to work is the right to live. * * * Labor cannot be property. The only way to possess labor is to possess men. That means slavery." So much for that republican yapper.

If the so-called Labor world has one pre-eminently distinguishing characteristic, it is that of always sitting up and yapping in unison with any yapper who attunes his yapping so as to pleasingly titillate the heartstrings of Labor, provided the aforesaid yapper belongs to the class that is made up of the political and economic enemies of labor. If one of their own class yaps, the workers will take no notice, but let some capitalist pirate, politician, professor, preacher, press-writer or other paid hireling of the ruling class, yap a few high-sounding phrases of pretended sympathy with the aspirations of labor, and every simp in the labor camp will fall at his feet in worship and lugubriously howl in approbation of his apparent heartbeats of sympathy with the masses. Anything that comes from the spokesman of the ruling class is taken by the Labor world as the law and the gospel, provided it be dished up in windy phrase suitably tinctured with sob stuff and sweet-scented sympathy for "the toiling masses."

It does not matter in the least what any capitalist court may decide in regard to the property status of the worker, the fact stares all who care to see, in the face, that the working class is all there is or ever was to property, in the sense that property is something that can and does bring to its owner an income or revenue, because of his property. There is nothing on top of this earth that can, or does, bring to the owner a revenue outside of his own labor, except the labor of others. No man or class can command the labor of others so as to appropriate the revenue resulting from the expenditure of their labor, unless he or they absolutely own them, body, soul and breeches. That ought to be plain enough for any one to understand, even a thick-headed labor leader who is given to parroting the sympathetic

mouthings of capitalist tinhorn politicians and thimble-riggers. Of course, "labor cannot be property unless men are property," and it is true that, "that means slavery." That is exactly what exists under the capitalist regime. The working class is the property of the capitalists. That is the property from which they draw their billion of profit. Where is the fatheaded fool that is simple enough to fancy they get it from any other source? Wherever he may be found, let him be assured that the portals of the home for the feeble-minded are yawning for him. And yet the Labor press is loaded with the senseless mouthings of the LaFollettes and other windbags, over these court decisions and such ruling class rubbish, instead of carrying some message of real meaning and value to the enslaved millions that constitute the rank and file of the Labor army. A little more exercise of common sense and less ado about nothing, might help a little towards raising the Labor movement above the level of that dull mediocrity that blindly accepts the dangerous lip service of capitalist politicians and time-servers as its guide and its hope. If Labor is to be worthy of emblazoning upon its banner, "Labor Omnia Vincit," the workers must first conquer their own ignorance of their class and its position in present day society, and then go forth like men and conquer their freedom from the stigma of slavery and property.

What Do Wilson and Hughes Crowds Mean When They Talk About Liberty?

HORACE TRAUBEL

I don't know. Do you?

Everybody uses all the nice catch words. They're handy. They serve the immediate purpose of ignorance or hypocrisy.

Everybody says we must be honest. But very few people tell us how to be honest.

When you say you believe in liberty I want to know what you mean by liberty.

When you say you believe in justice I want to know what you call justice.

Some of the ugliest characters use the most beautiful phrases. And some of the most beautiful characters use the ugliest phrases.

Wilson is constantly saying he believes in liberty and honesty. But how can a man who upholds the capitalist system believe in either? For capitalism is the negation of both.

They believe in liberty by believing in everything that exists. And they believe in liberty by denying everything that's prophesied.

If you want to know what Wilson means by liberty ask him what he means by economic justice. Hughes and Wilson get all the established institutions under their feet and say: Upon this rock we stand.

It's as if a man put out the sun and said: I believe in light.

It's as if you shut your eyes and said you believe in seeing. As if you closed your ears and said: I believe in hearing. It's as if you tied your two legs together and said you believed in walking.

You gag a man and say you believe in human speech. You say you believe everybody has a right to an equal life. And then you make it impossible for them to get a living. You say every road should be wide open to everybody. Yet you choke every road with obstructions.

That's the liberty you talk about. For that's the only sort of liberty you leave to us.

After you've got all the liberty you want there's very little liberty left for anybody else.

Every man believes in liberty for himself. But few men believe in liberty for all.

You believe in the liberty of one to grab. I believe in the liberty of all to serve.

When a man who believes in profit says he believes in liberty it seems like a man who starves you to death saying he believes in food.

Wilson talks very vehemently about the liberty of Americans in other countries, but is very mild when he talks about

the liberty of Americans in the United States. He says nothing about the liberty of negroes in Texas. He says nothing about the liberty of white women and children in Colorado. He says nothing about the liberty of the shirtwaist workers in New York. He gives us a heap big dissertation on liberty in general. But when it comes to liberty in particular he shuts up.

Wilson has a neat little expedient. He gets rid of questions that he's not ready for by calling them state, not national, questions. When he was governor of New Jersey he used to get rid of the annoying problems by calling them national, not state, questions.

What I want these men to do is to come down off their high horses and tell us just what they mean. We know what they say. But it's an unsolvable puzzle to know what they mean.

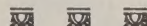
Liberty is that thing which helps you to live. You have much liberty if you live more. You have little liberty if you live less. A man might have all the liberty there is. But if he hasn't a living his liberty is a mockery.

What I want to know from our scribblers and chatters is what they mean by liberty, justice, Americanism and fraternity. They roll these words off their tongues unctuously as if they didn't need to be explained.

The average American fools himself and is fooled by these oily phrases of our political masters.

We wrestle with the curse of words. We are tangled in the damnation of phrases. The orators cry: "God knows we're lovers of liberty." God may know. But I know I don't know.

You love to toy with the syllables of promise. You dangle them temptingly before our deceived vision. But in the perdition of your deeds you violate the paradise of your speech.



DEFENSE FUND SAN FRANCISCO LABOR PRISONERS Per Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman

Total collected to September 15th	\$1,360.65
John Beverley Robinson, Douglas, Mich.	\$ 10.00
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I. Blair, New York City	1.00
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Anarchist Red Cross, per A. Winocur, Dorchester, Mass.	2.50
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Albert and Edith Matheo, New York....	3.00
I. Bertason, Seattle	2.00
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Emma Goldman, collection at Denver lectures	22.00
F. Rascher, St. Louis, Mo.	.50
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Union of Russian Workers, Pittsburg	8.60
Mrs. J. E. Baker, Portland, Oregon	1.00
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Ernest Schleifer, Business Agent International Ass'n Machinists, No. 60, Detroit, Mich.	5.00
W. S. Van Valkenburgh, Scotia, N. Y., subscription list No. 235, per Emma Goldman	4.50
Samuel Hartman, New York, subscription list No. 148	4.75
	101.15
	\$1,461.80
Previously turned over to the Defense by Alexander Berkman	\$1,360.65
To prisoners	\$ 34.00
Per Robert Minor, Treasurer	67.15
	101.15

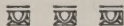
Oct. 15—Total amount turned over to the Defense....\$1,461.80

TO OUR FRIENDS AND COMRADES,

By whose generous co-operation we are enabled to keep up **The Blast** in spite of the greatest difficulties, we want to express our deepest appreciation. The defense of the accused labor men in San Francisco, and other work, is keeping us so busy that we cannot spare the time necessary for correspondence. We hope that our friends will bear with us.

The various organizations that have sent us letters and resolutions of sympathy have given us great encouragement in our work. We regret that space in **The Blast** at present precludes the publication of those resolutions.

THE BLASTERS.



BLAST WAR FUND

Nel M. Moyer, Garwin, Iowa, \$1; Albert Steinhauser, Minneapolis, \$2; G. A. Burri, Cleveland, \$5; Carl Gleaser, Kansas City, \$1; Charles Weil, Seattle, \$1; Joseph D'Angelo, Delaware, \$1; Carl Larson, Utah, \$2; R. R. Sharma, \$3; John Baff, Cleveland, \$1.50; Van Cleave, \$5; Russian Group, Cleveland, \$3.50; Elizabeth Brees, Oregon, \$2; A Friend, \$50; Charles Wright, Chicago, 25 cents; Arthur Gow, Montana, \$1; Robert Ladig, \$1; Wade Stewart, \$1; G. E. Nukel, \$1; Manuel Pereira, \$2; Clement Anastanoff, Portland, per subscription list, \$15; A. Marietta, Sacramento, \$10; Morris Becker, New York, per subscription list, \$10.70; Laduska, Alhambra, \$1; E. Levin, \$6; H. J. Van Huzen, \$1; Miss A. Kisluik, New York, \$4; Nick Picirillo, Ohio, \$1; Rose Stern, New York, \$2; Petr Armanini, Ringo, Kansas, \$10; Paul Kutchan, West Virginia, \$5; Charles Campanaggi, New York, \$2; M. Maselli, \$1; Benjamin Axelrod, \$2; Mary Giordanengo, \$1; Hans Tall, subscription list, \$8; E. B. Partain, Illinois, \$1; Del Vecy, \$1; L. E. Hall, \$1; Josephine Lack, \$1; Henry Wiedel, \$1; P. Kuprin, Detroit, \$5; Union of Russian Workers, Pittsburgh, \$12.80; E. Petersen, Kansas City, subscription list, \$6.25; Workmen's Circle, Kansas City, \$1; T. H. Houghton, \$1; Joe Russo, Sacramento, \$1; S. Amper, Chicago, 50 cents; J. Wridunan, Chicago, \$1; J. L., San Francisco, \$2; J. Iorio, \$2; L. Caesar, Oakland, \$1; Agnes Inglis, Ann Arbor, \$1; Basara, \$4; Russian Workers, Philadelphia, collection, \$15.75; A Friend, Denver, \$1; Joseph Rothberg, Albany, subscription list, \$8; Van Valkenburg, \$1; Tom Bell, Arizona, \$5; H. Armand, Arizona, collection, \$16; A Friend, \$1; James Hallbeck, \$5; Union Russian Workers, per Jack Myers, \$4.35; Sam Jetcoff, Detroit, \$1; John Grigsby, Louisville, Ky., \$1; Dorothy Alden, \$10; A Friend, \$1; Anarchist Red Cross, Boston, \$1; K. Zomer, \$5; collected by Rhoda Smith, Cleveland, \$5.25; F. Belmas, Detroit, \$5; Joe Bertino, subscription list, \$5; A Friend, \$1; contributions per David Shuffer, Lynn, Mass., \$21; Mrs. E. Bond, Oregon, \$1; Esta Milstein collection, New York, \$3.70; Frances Donneley, \$1; Edith and Albert Matheo, New York, \$2; M. E., \$1; Daniel Kiefer, Cincinnati, \$5; I. Bertoni, Seattle, \$1; Paul Herzog, New York, \$10; D. J. Zimmerman, subscription list, \$3.10; Roger Baldwin, St. Louis, \$1; Alex Nelson, St. Louis, \$2; W. H. Johnson, Kansas City, \$5; S. Matta, Utah, 50 cents; J. M. Garrick, Los Angeles, 50 cents; subscription list, per Minna Lowensohn, New York, \$30.40; Dora Pines, Brooklyn, N. Y., subscription list, \$15.55; James L. Wright, \$5; Henry Maroni, \$2; Egisti Bertozzi, \$1; Karl Herlitz, \$1; Pauline Sperry, Maine, \$1; subscription list, per Esther Lieb, Philadelphia, \$14; Workmen's Circle, Toronto, Canada, per D. Levy, 50 cents; subscription list, per Sam Castagna, Chicago, \$13.85; Workmen's Circle, New York, per A. Shipman, \$3; contributions, per Cronaca Sovversiva, \$28.50; John Chukan, Kenosha, \$1; Hester Gibson, \$8; Morris Becker, New York, \$1; John Buchie, subscription list, \$2.50; subscription list, per Benjamin Axelrod, Massachusetts, \$11; Arbeiter Ring, No. 268, per I. Epstein, St. Paul, 50 cents; subscription list per Nick Picirillo, Steubenville, Ohio, \$6.25; subscription list, per Benjamin Gordon, Detroit, Michigan, \$11.35; subscription list, per Tony Williams, Buffalo, \$3.75; Russian Labor Group, Brockton, Mass., per M. Antonovich, \$2.50; W. Shepps, Dover, N. J., \$2; Union of Russian Workers, Pittsburgh, Pa., \$5.25; S. Solomon, N. Y., \$1; A. Westrup, \$1; Wichita, Kansas, per J. Kabeinell, \$2.50; Joe Soyex, Los Angeles, \$1; S. Kirsh, 60 cents; John M. Paige, Maine, \$1; Mrs. J. E. Baker, Portland, \$1; Fritz Holm, Seattle, Wash., \$1; Peter Prestianini, New York, \$1; Sam Cohen, Seattle, \$10; Charles Tambrello, Cardiff, per subscription list, \$13.25.

IT GIVES me a good deal of pleasure to publish the note below from my friend Joe Ettor. I am glad that he was not guilty of the foolish "criticism" of Anarchism and Anarchists in a recent issue of *Solidarity*.

Virginia, Minn., Sept. 15, 1916.

Fellow Worker:

I notice in **THE BLAST** of September 1st an editorial in which you credit me with an article in *Solidarity* commenting on your paper.

You are among many that make the mistake to believe that "J. E." means Joe Ettor. That is a mistake. I never write under my initials. I always use my full name and the "J. E." of *Solidarity* is some one else.

Hoping that you will make this correction, with well wishes and salutations, I am,

Sincerely yours,

JOS. J. ETTOR.

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